DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

[Docket Number: 950124024–5024–01]

RIN 0660–AA04

National Telecommunications and Information Administration

Telecommunications and Information Infrastructure Assistance Program (TIIAP)

CFDA: 11.552.

AGENCY: National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of availability of funds.

SUMMARY: The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) announces the availability of funds to promote the widespread use of advanced telecommunications and information technologies in the public and non-profit sectors. By providing targeted, matching demonstration and planning grants, this program will help to develop a nationwide, interactive, multimedia information infrastructure that is accessible to all citizens, in rural as well as urban areas.

DATES: In order to facilitate planning for and scheduling of the review process, all applicants are required to send NTIA a non-binding letter of intent to submit an application. All letters of intent should be received by 5 p.m. est on March 23, 1995. Any exceptions to this policy will be determined on a case-by-case basis for good cause shown.

The 1995 TIIAP grant cycle will include three primary application categories. Program deadlines vary, depending on the category in which a proposal is being submitted.

For Category One applications requesting less than $1 million, and for all other categories, complete applications must be mailed or hand carried to the address indicated below and received by NTIA by 5 p.m. edt on April 20, 1995. NTIA anticipates that it will take between 4 and 6 months to process each application and make final funding determinations.

For Category One applications requesting $1 million or more from the TIIAP, applicants are required to submit abbreviated preliminary proposals. Preliminary proposals must be received by NTIA by 5 p.m. edt on April 6, 1995. The purpose of requiring preliminary proposals is to reduce the burden on the applicant by providing the applicant with feedback on the proposed project without requiring the applicant to submit a complete application.

Each preliminary proposal will be reviewed based on the criteria in this Notice by an expert panel, which will advise the TIIAP staff about whether or not to recommend that the applicant submit a full proposal. Note that the TIIAP's recommendation on submission of a full proposal is not binding; applicants whose preliminary proposals are not recommended may choose to submit full applications at their discretion. Furthermore, the review of a preliminary proposal will not prejudice the review of the subsequent full proposal. Full proposals for Category One applicants requesting $1 million or more from the TIIAP must be received at NTIA by 5 p.m. edt on June 22, 1995. No full proposals for Category One projects requesting $1 million or more will be accepted by the TIIAP unless a corresponding preliminary proposal was submitted by the April 6 deadline.

February–March—Regional workshops for prospective applicants (contact TIIAP for additional information about dates and locations)

March 23—Deadline for receipt of letters of intent (by 5 p.m. est)

April 6—Deadline for receipt of preliminary proposals in Category One (applies only to proposals requesting $1 million or more) (by 5 p.m. edt)

April 20—Deadline for receipt of proposals in Category One (proposals requesting less than $1 million), Category Two, and Category Three (by 5 p.m. edt)

June 22—Deadline for receipt of final proposals in Category One (proposals requesting $1 million or more) (by 5 p.m. edt)

ADDRESSES: Telecommunications and Information Infrastructure Assistance Program, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, United States Department of Commerce, 14th Street and Constitution Avenue NW., Room 6043 HCHB, Washington, D.C. 20230. Fax: 202/501–5136. Internet: tiiap@ntia.doc.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Laura Breeden, Director of the Telecommunications and Information Infrastructure Assistance Program, Telephone: 202/482–2048; fax: 202/501–5136; e-mail: tiiap@ntia.doc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Program Description

NTIA announces the second annual round of a competitive matching grant program, the TIIAP, created to promote the development and widespread availability of advanced telecommunications and information technologies to serve the public interest.

The TIIAP will provide matching grants to state and local governments, non-profit health care and public health providers, school districts, libraries, universities, public safety providers, community-based organizations, and other non-profit entities. Grants will be awarded after a competitive merit review process and will be used to fund projects that improve the quality of, and the public's access to, education and lifelong learning; reduce the cost, improve the quality, and/or increase the accessibility of health care and other social services; promote the accessibility and responsiveness of state and local governments to their citizens and encourage citizen participation in government; improve the efficiency and efficacy of government services; enhance public safety; and promote economic development in rural and urban areas.

NTIA expects that the level of competition will be extremely strong, as it was in fiscal year 1994, when NTIA received 1,088 applications, collectively requesting more than $550 million in grant funds. On October 12, 1994, the Department of Commerce announced 92 TIIAP awards amounting to a total of $24.4 million in Federal funds.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligible Organizations

The fiscal year 1995 TIIAP grant cycle is divided into three categories. State and local governments and non-profit entities are eligible to apply in all categories. Individuals and for-profit organizations are not eligible.

Interactive Services

All services and networks proposed under the TIIAP must be interactive; the program does not support the construction or augmentation of one-way networks.

Matching Funds Requirements

Grant recipients under this program will be required to provide matching funds toward the total project cost. A project will not be considered eligible for funding unless the applicant can document the capacity to supply matching funds. Matching funds may be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions (see OMB Circular A–110). Grant funds under this program will be released in direct proportion to local matching funds raised and/or documented. Except as noted below in the case of demonstration projects for which the request is $1 million or more in NTIA funding, NTIA will supply up to 50% of the total project cost, unless extraordinary circumstances warrant a

grant to up to 75%. Federal funds generally may not be used as matching monies. However, when authorized by Federal statute, other Federal funds may be used for cost sharing or matching. Please contact the TIIAP for more information, if you have questions about matching funds requirements.

For demonstration projects for which the request is $1 million or more, the following conditions apply. NTIA will supply up to 25% of the ''total NTIA-supported project cost'' (the total NTIA-supported project cost refers to the NTIA grant funds plus matching funds). However, if a proposed NTIA-supported project is a component of a more comprehensive initiative, for which the applicant has obtained or is seeking funding from another Federal agency or agencies, then NTIA will consider supplying up to one-third of the total NTIA-supported project cost. The proposal must clearly describe the scope of work supported by NTIA and be supported by a budget and a budget narrative indicating the expenditure of both NTIA and matching funds. The success of a proposal and the level of funding from NTIA may depend on the applicant's ability to have components funded through other Federal sources.

Past Performance

Unsatisfactory performance under prior Federal financial assistance awards may result in an application not being considered for funding.

Delinquent Federal Debts

No award of Federal funds shall be made to an applicant who has an outstanding delinquent Federal debt until either:

1. The delinquent account is paid in full;

2. A negotiated repayment schedule is established and at least one payment is received; or

3. Other arrangements satisfactory to the Department of Commerce are made.

No Funding for Sectarian Purposes

The Department of Commerce has a long standing policy of not funding projects for purposes the essential thrust of which is sectarian. Consistent with this policy. TIIAP will not fund projects the essential thrust of which is sectarian. Sectarian organizations, however, are eligible applicants and may request funds for non-sectarian purposes. [Cf. NTIA Public Telecommunications Facilities Program (PTFP) regulations at 15 C.F.R. §§ 2301.1 and 2301.22(d); *Fordham University* v. *Brown,* No. 93–2120 (CRR) (D.D.C. June 29, 1994), appeal docketed, No. 94–5229 (D.C. Cir. Aug. 22, 1994)]

Program Categories

Introduction

The 1995 TIIAP grant cycle is divided into three separate categories. Category One is comprised of Demonstration projects. Category Two is comprised of Access projects. Category Three is comprised of Planning projects. Categories One and Three are further divided into two sub-categories each.

NTIA will award approximately 60% of the funds in this program to support demonstration projects (Category One), with approximately 25% of the funds to support access projects (Category Two) and approximately 15% to support planning projects (Category Three), unless the quality and/or submissions in any category does not, in NTIA's judgment, merit the proposed allocation of funds.

All TIIAP proposals will be evaluated using the same criteria, as explained below, but the relative weights of the criteria vary from category to category. Please keep this in mind as you read the following section.

Note that while there is no upper limit on the amount of funds that any organization may request in Category One or in Category Three, the overall level of funding will place obvious limits on the amount of funding available for individual grants. The largest award made in fiscal year 1994 was $733,424.

Category One (Demonstration Projects)

Category One is for exemplary projects that involve the deployment, use, and attendant evaluation of the national information infrastructure to solve a particular problem or set of problems, and that have high potential to serve as models for other communities to follow. Category One is divided into two subcategories based on the amount of NTIA funds requested by the applicant. Proposals requesting $1 million or more from NTIA are subject to a different application process and to different matching funds requirements than proposals requesting less than $1 million. Applicants who choose to apply in Category One should read carefully the sections on Dates, Matching Funds Requirements, Application Forms, and Selection Process.

NTIA's priority in Category One is to leverage the Federal Government's investments by supporting demonstration projects that can serve as national models. Demonstration projects must involve the delivery of useful, practical services in real-world environments within the grant award period. Therefore, while some software

development may be required to integrate existing systems or components, it may not be a major emphasis of any demonstration project. Similarly, the TIIAP will not support projects whose primary focus is the development of information content rather than the practical application of information infrastructure.

Projects proposed under this category must address important problems and must demonstrate high-impact, useful applications of information infrastructure. These projects should hold significant potential for replication in other communities. Applicants in this category must explain how their project will add to what is already known about the problems that the project addresses. Applicants must keep in mind that it is the application of the technology to specific needs or problems that is to be demonstrated, not the technology itself. Furthermore, the emphasis in this category is not on showing that an approach is technically feasible, but that the approach is cost effective and appropriate. Demonstration projects should be innovative to the extent that they represent promising approaches whose benefits and costs may not be fully understood.

By supporting demonstration projects, NTIA intends to stimulate the effective and efficient use of the NII. However, without a rigorous evaluation and active dissemination of results, the potential of any project to play such a catalyzing role is severely limited. Therefore, the TIIAP will use high standards in reviewing the evaluation and dissemination plans presented by proposals in this category.

Category Two (Access Projects)

In this category the TIIAP will support projects whose principal aim is to provide greater access to a national information infrastructure for underserved communities, populations, and/or geographic areas. The emphasis is on basic connectivity, rather than uniqueness or innovation. An access project may build on or emulate a successful model project, either one previously supported by the TIIAP or a model that has gained widespread acceptance in the field.

The primary goals of Category Two projects will be: (1) To reduce disparities in access to and use of the national information infrastructure; (2) to promote high levels of support from diverse members of the community; and (3) to support projects that are guided by the needs of end users. Applicants are strongly urged to provide the TIIAP with a thorough breakdown of the

various end user groups to be brought on-line; the services to be provided; the information resources to be made available; the public and private organizations and agencies that will participate in the project; and the mechanisms to be employed for informing end users about the existence of the system, ensuring that prospective end users possess adequate skills to use the system, and providing ongoing training for end users.

As in the case of demonstration projects, the emphasis is on the application of technology, rather than the technology itself. Proposals must include compelling evidence that the technology to be employed is both appropriate to the proposed task and cost-effective. Examples of applications in this category would include the establishment of community information networks; creation of wide-area networks within school systems or districts; and provision of Internet access to an isolated group or population. Projects that include extensive software or hardware development will not be considered.

Note: No award in Category Two will exceed $250,000.

Category Three (Planning Projects)

In this category the TIIAP will support planning processes in which organizations, or groups of organizations, develop strategies and plans for the enhanced application of information infrastructure. Planning projects are encouraged for rural or underserved populations where telecommunications could provide enhanced economic opportunity or where business development is insufficient to sustain growth.

Proposals in this category must include clear descriptions both of the planning process (or methodology) to be employed and of the expected outcomes of the process. Each planning project should address how end users will have access to information and will be connected to one another. Applicants should identify the anticipated end users of the information infrastructure and describe the number and diversity of end users, as well as the social and economic benefits expected from implementation.

In addition, NTIA encourages applications that demonstrate partnerships among groups, communities, and entities for the purpose of sharing or leveraging resources. These partnerships or coalitions should demonstrate that, if appropriate, they will continue to operate effectively once TIIAP support is concluded and/or the project plans

are implemented. Applicants should also clearly document the administrative or institutional support that has been generated for any planning grant.

Planning grants are divided into two sub-categories:

1. Statewide or Local

This sub-category includes planning proposals that illustrate that the economic and social benefits from an advanced information infrastructure are many and can encompass many sectors, including business, education and training, public and social services, and environmental goals. Planning grants in this sub-category should be multidisciplinary in scope and should focus on the needs of several sectors (*e.g.*, education, health, public information, etc.). For example, the TIIAP awarded grants in fiscal year 1994 to state governments and universities to develop comprehensive statewide information infrastructure plans.

2. Regional or National

Planning activities in this subcategory may focus on a single sector or topic, as long as the project is regional (*i.e.*, involving multiple states) or national in scope. For example, the TIIAP awarded a grant in fiscal year 1994 to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education to develop a plan to build an ongoing capacity to ''broker'' the educational resources of western colleges and universities by using existing telecommunications networks to make higher education more widely available in rural areas of 15 states in the West.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed according to the following evaluation criteria. The weight of each criterion will vary according to the category of the proposal, as explained below.

(1) Problem Definition

Applicants must clearly explain *why* the proposed project is needed, and *how* the project will meet the needs identified. This may seem obvious; however, a proposal will often fail to survive the competition because the applicant has spent too much effort on unnecessary rhetoric, and too little effort on clearly defining the *actual problem to be solved or the need to be addressed* by the project. It is essential that the problem definition present a convincing case as to why and how a particular problem, task, or social need can best be addressed through the application of information infrastructure.

(2) Applicant Qualifications

Every applicant must present evidence that it has both the experience and the expertise to bring the project to a successful conclusion. Applicants should take care to describe the qualifications of the participating organizations, the key personnel associated with the project, their relationship to the applicant organization, and the applicant's experience in addressing information-related issues. Experience may be demonstrated in a variety of ways, including projects successfully completed and participation in comprehensive planning activities. In addition, each applicant should present evidence that it is not only a capable organization but also an appropriate and credible organization to undertake the project it proposes.

(3) Support for End Users

Since the success of the NII will depend on both its accessibility and the value it offers to end users, projects supported by the TIIAP must demonstrate a high degree of attention to the needs, skills, and working conditions of the targeted end users. The program will look carefully at the degree of end user involvement in the design of proposed projects and at the plans for training users and/or upgrading their skills. Applicants should explain clearly how targeted end users will benefit from the services offered, or how the project will provide the public with easily accessible, useful and useable information. NTIA expects applicants to consider carefully safeguards to protect the privacy of the end users of the information infrastructure funded through this grant program. In addition, applicants proposing projects dealing with individually identifiable information (student grades, medical records, etc.) will be required to prescribe mechanisms for protecting the confidentiality of such information and the privacy of any individuals involved.

(4) Partnerships and Community Support

Broad community support is essential to the viability of TIIAP projects. Partnerships will diverse sectors of the community will be considered an integral part of the proposal. The most successful partnerships are those that create ''win-win'' situations for all parties involved; every partner both contributes to and benefits from the partnership. Partners must also demonstrate the ability to work together. Evidence of strong community support

also includes a solid commitment of a high-quality, non-Federal match. Beyond the mandatory commitment of a non-Federal match, TIIAP is concerned with the long term sustainability of a project. Applicants should discuss how they plan to sustain the project after the period of Federal funding is over. Finally, a representative sample of thoughtful letters of support from diverse elements of the community may provide evidence of solid support that will help assure the project's success.

(5) Reducing Disparities in Access to and Use of the Natural Information Infrastructure

One of the Administration's primary NII goals is reducing gaps between information "haves" and "have-nots." Therefore, TIIAP will support projects that increase an underserved population's access to social services and information made available via information infrastructure. Of primary importance is the applicant's plan to redress disparities of access. For example, difficulties in access to information infrastructure may arise from living in a remote rural area or from economic hardship in the inner city. Redressing these disparities in access may involve unique sharing arrangements, innovative outreach strategies, or sensitivity to local conditions of populations that are traditionally underserved. Whatever a particular situation, the applicant must demonstrate that the project will reduce disparities of access and use.

(6) Technical Quality

Technical quality in the TIIAP focuses not on innovation for its own sake, but on consistency with the vision of a nationwide, seamless, interactive network of networks. Therefore, projects proposed to the TIIAP must demonstrate an awareness of, and a realistic approach to, questions of interoperability and scalability. The TIIAP will not support standalone small- or large-scale systems that cannot communicate effectively with other systems. Similarly, the program will not consider proposals for systems that are likely to limit rather than permit growth in the number of sites served, the number of end users accommodated, the number of institutions connected, or the range of information and communication services provided. Where feasible, applicants should seek to build upon existing information infrastructure. Applicants must demonstrate knowledge of existing information infrastructure in the area to be served by the project. Applicants must also address how they intend to

deal with the issue of rapid obsolescence by describing their plans to accommodate advances in information and telecommunications technologies. In addition to demonstrating technological soundness, applicants must show that the approach proposed is both cost-effective and appropriate to the need or problem that is to be addressed. Proposals in Category Three (Planning Projects) will also be rated on the soundness of the planning methodology that is presented in the application.

(7) Evaluation and Dissemination

An evaluation of each project is critical in order to answer the essential question of whether or not the project has achieved its goals. Evaluation summaries will be particularly important as projects progress and comparisons can be made and conclusions drawn. For these reasons, every project proposed to the TIIAP must present a clearly defined evaluation strategy that offers rational criteria for measuring the effectiveness of the project in reaching its goals during the grant award period and identifies specific evaluation instruments to be employed. The applicant should also demonstrate adequate experience in arranging and conducting a project evaluation, with the attendant budget for a thorough and useful evaluation. In conjunction with the evaluation strategy, the TIIAP will review the applicant's plan to disseminate the knowledge gained as a result of implementing the project.

(8) Ability to Serve as a Model

In Category One, the TIIAP is interested in supporting projects whose ultimate impact will extend far beyond the scope of the activities funded. Therefore, the program will examine closely the degree to which a proposed project has the potential to serve as a model for others to follow. A focus of this criterion will be the extent to which a project is innovative, not necessarily in terms of the technology to be used, but rather in the application of the technology in a particular setting, in the service of a particular population, or in the solution of a particular problem. Projects will also be judged on whether they can be replicated in other communities and can serve as a catalyst or blueprint for other sectors of society or other providers of services. In addition, the program will examine whether a subsequent evaluation of the project can contribute significantly to our understanding of how the national information infrastructure can be used to improve the delivery of a wide range

of social services and promote economic development. Implicit in this concept of a model project is financial viability. Therefore, applicants who intend for their projects to be considered as models must address the issue of the sustainability of the project beyond the grant period.

The above evaluation criteria are weighted as follows:

Criteria	Category one (percent)	Category two (percent)	Category three (percent)
(1) Problem Definition ..	10	10	10
(2) Applicant Qualifications	10	10	10
(3) Support for End Users	10	15	15
(4) Partnerships and Community Support	10	15	20
(5) Reducing Disparities	10	25	15
(6) Technical Quality	15	10	10
(7) Evaluation and Dissemination	15	10	10
(8) Ability to Serve as a Model	20	5	10

Selection Process

TIIAP grants are awarded on the basis of a competitive review process. Each application will be thoroughly reviewed by a panel of outside readers, who have demonstrated expertise in both the programmatic and technological aspects of the application. The review panels will evaluate applications according to the criteria listed in this Notice and make non-binding recommendations to the program staff. Under the guidance of the TIIAP Director, staff will prepare proposed slates of the highest rated projects to be funded for consideration by the NTIA Administrator, who is the selecting official.

The TIIAP Director will propose the slates to the NTIA Administrator in two stages: a slate of Category Two applications, and a slate of applications in Categories One and Three. Acting on these recommendations, the Administrator will select the applications to be negotiated for possible grant award.

In making their decisions, the Program Director and the Administrator will consider the following:

1. The evaluations of the outside reviewers;

2. The degree to which each slate of applications, taken as a whole, satisfies the program's stated purposes for the applicable program categories;

3. The geographic distribution of the proposed grant awards;

4. The diversity of the technologies employed by the proposed grant awards;

5. The diversity of projects represented by the proposed grant awards;

6. The promotion of equitable access to and use of the information infrastructure for traditionally disadvantaged or under-served groups;

7. Avoidance of redundancy and conflicts with the initiatives of other Federal agencies; and

8. The availability of funds.

After applications have been selected in this manner, negotiations will take place between TIIAP staff and the applicant. These negotiations are intended to resolve any differences that exist between the applicant's original request and what TIIAP proposes to fund. Not all applicants who are contacted for negotiation will necessarily receive a TIIAP award.

When the negotiations are completed for Category Two, the TIIAP Director will recommend final award actions to the NTIA Administrator. Applying the same factors listed above, the Administrator will then make the final selection of grant recipients from the pool of negotiated applications in Category Two. This process is repeated for the set of projects approved for negotiation in Categories One and Three.

Eligible Costs

Eligible Costs

Allowable costs incurred under approved projects shall be determined in accordance with applicable Federal costs principles, *i.e.,* OMB Circular A–21, A–87, or A–122. If included in the approved project budget, the TIIAP will allow costs for personnel, fringe benefits, computer hardware and software, other end-user equipment, telecommunication services and related equipment, consultants and other contractual services, travel, rental of office equipment, furniture and space, supplies, etc. that are reasonable and directly related to the project. Construction costs are not eligible.

Note that costs that are ineligible for TIIAP support may not be included as part of the applicant's matching fund contribution.

Indirect Costs

The total dollar amount of the indirect costs proposed in an application under

TIIAP must not exceed the indirect cost rate negotiated and approved by a cognizant Federal agency prior to the proposed effective date of the award, or 100% of the total proposed direct costs dollar amount in the application, whichever is less.

Award Period

Successful applicants in Category One will have between 12 and 24 months to complete their projects. Successful applicants in Categories Two and Three will have between 12 and 18 months to complete their projects. The actual time will vary depending on the complexity of the project.

Other Information

Electronic Information

Information about NTIA and the TIIAP, including this document and the *Guidelines for Preparing Applications,* can be retrieved electronically via the Internet through ftp, gopher and the World Wide Web.

To reach the ftp server, ftp to ftp.ntia.doc.gov. Use the login name of 'anonymous' and use your email address as the password. Change to the /grantinfo directory to find TIIAP files.

To reach the gopher server, point your gopher client at gopher.ntia.doc.gov and login as 'gopher'.

To reach the www server, use http://www.ntia.doc.gov to reach the NTIA Home Page. Follow the link entitled 'What's New' to reach TIIAP information.

TIIAP can also be reached via electronic mail at tiiap@ntia.doc.gov.

Technical Assistance

TIIAP program staff are available to provide technical assistance to applicants on a first-come, first-served basis until the time that a proposal has been submitted to NTIA. All applicants are asked to read carefully both this Notice and the *Guidelines for Preparing Applications* before contacting staff for technical assistance. In addition to outreach through professional conferences and meetings, NTIA will be conducting a series of regional workshops to provide potential applicants with information on the program and application procedures. Information on these workshops is provided in the Dates section.

Application Forms

Standard Forms 424, Application for Federal Assistance; 424A, Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs; and 424B, Assurances—Non-Construction Programs, (Rev. 4–92), and other Department of Commerce forms shall be used in applying for financial

assistance. These forms are included in the Guidelines for Preparing Applications, which can be obtained by contacting NTIA by telephone, fax, or electronic mail, as described in the **ADDRESS** section above. The TIIAP requires one original and five copies of the application. Applicants for whom the submission of five copies presents financial hardship may submit one original and two copies of the application.

Because of the high level of public interest in projects supported by the TIIAP, the program anticipates receiving requests for copies of applications. Applicants are hereby notified that the applications they submit are subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Applicants may identify sensitive information and label it "confidential" to assist NTIA in making disclosure determinations.

Abbreviated proposals under Category One do not need to include the above standard forms. Instructions for preparing an abbreviated proposal are included in the Guidelines for Preparing Applications.

As noted above, all applicants are required to submit a non-binding letter of intent in advance of submitting a full proposal. The letter of intent shall contain information on how to contact the applicant, the category in which the applicant intends to apply, the subject area of the intended proposal, and a brief description of the project that is to be proposed. Detailed instructions for preparing a letter of intent are included in the Guidelines for Preparing Applications.

Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for awards under this program shall be a grant.

Authority and Funding Availability

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), Department of Commerce, serves as the President's principal adviser on telecommunications and information policy. NTIA's functions were codified as part of the Telecommunications Authorization Act of 1992, Pub. L. No. 102–538, 106 Stat. 3533, 47 U.S.C. §§ 901–04 (1993).

As specified in the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 1994, Pub. L. No. 103–317, 108 Stat. 1724, 1747 (1994), Congress has provided the Department of Commerce $64 million for the TIIAP for fiscal year 1995. The grant funds may be used for the planning and construction of telecommunications networks for the provision of

educational, cultural, health care, public information, public safety, or other social services (notwithstanding the requirements of 47 U.S.C. 392 (a) and (c)).

Federal Policies and Procedures

Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all applicable Federal laws and Federal and Department of Commerce policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

Purchase of American-Made Equipment and Products

Applicants are hereby notified that they will be encouraged, to the greatest extent practicable, to purchase American-made equipment and products with funding provided under this program in accordance with Congressional intent as set forth in the resolution contained in Public Law 103–317, Sections 607 (a) and (b).

Pre-Award Activities

If applicants incur any costs prior to an award being made, they do so solely at their own risk of not being reimbursed by the government. Applicants are hereby notified that, notwithstanding any oral or written assurance that they may have received, there is no obligation on the part of the Department of Commerce or NTIA to cover pre-award costs.

No Obligation for Future Funding

If an application is selected for funding, the Department of Commerce has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with that award. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of the Department of Commerce. Receipt of a TIIAP grant, however, will not eliminate the recipient from consideration for future funding.

Name Check Review

All non-profit and for-profit applicants are subject to a name check review process. Name checks are intended to reveal if any key individuals associated with the applicant have been convicted of or presently facing criminal charges such as fraud, theft, perjury, or other matters that significantly reflect on the applicant's management, honesty, or financial integrity.

Primary Applicant Certifications

All primary applicants must submit a completed Form CD–511, ''Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; Drug-Free Workplace

Requirements and Lobbying,'' and the following explanations are hereby provided:

1. Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension—Prospective participants (as defined at 15 CFR Part 26, Section 105) are subject to 15 CFR Part 26, ''Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension'' and the related section of the certification from prescribed above applies;

2. Drug-Free Workplace—Grantees (as defined at 15 CFR Part 26, Section 605) are subject to 15 CFR Part 26, Subpart F, ''Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants)'' and the related section of the certification form prescribed above applies;

3. Anti-Lobbying—Persons (as defined at 15 CFR Part 28, Section 105) are subject to the lobbying provisions of 31 U.S.C. 1352, ''Limitation on use of appropriated funds to influence certain Federal contracting and financial transactions,'' and the lobbying section of the certification form prescribed above applies to applications/bids for grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts for more than $100,000, and loans and loan guarantees for more than $150,000, or the single family maximum mortgage limit for affected programs, whichever is greater; and

4. Anti-Lobbying Disclosure—Any applicant that has paid or will pay for lobbying in connection with a covered Federal action, such as the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, or the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement using any funds must submit an SF–LLL, ''Disclosure of Lobbying Activities,'' as required under 15 CFR part 28, Appendix B.

Lower Tier Certifications

Recipients shall require applicants/bidders for subgrants, contracts, subcontracts, or other lower tier covered transactions at any tier under the award to submit, if applicable, a completed Form CD–512, ''Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Covered Transactions and Lobbying'' and disclosure from SF-LLL, ''Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.'' Form CD–512 is intended for the use of recipients and should not be transmitted to DOC. SF-LLL submitted by any tier recipient or subrecipient should be submitted to DOC in accordance with the instructions contained in the award document.

False Statements

A false statement on an application is grounds for denial or termination of funds and grounds for possible punishment by a fine or imprisonment as provided in 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are subject to Executive Order 12372, ''Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.'' This Notice was reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget under Executive Order 12866.

Definitions

Connectivity

The capacity of one system or device to link to a second system or device to complete a connection and provide continuing service. Connectivity is established among systems when it is possible for an end-user on one system to gain access to another system.

Content Development

The creation of information resources for the purpose of dissemination through one or more on-line services. Typically, content development involves the collection and organization of data, the design of an appropriate user interface, and the creation of software to allow information retrieval.

Demonstration Project

The deployment, use, and attendant evaluation of information infrastructure in the solution of a particular problem or set of problems.

End User

A person who customarily employs or seeks access to, rather than provides, information infrastructure. An end-user may be a consumer of information (e.g., a member of the public employing a touch-screen public access terminal); may be involved in an interactive communication with other end users; or may use information infrastructure to provide services to the public.

Information Infrastructure

The telecommunication networks, computers, other end-user devices, software, standards, and skills that collectively enable people to connect to each other and to a vast array of services and information resources.

Interactivity

The capacity of a communications system to allow end users to communicate directly with other users, either in real time (as in a video teleconference) or on a store-and-forward basis (as with electronic mail),

or to seek and gain access to information on an on-demand basis, as opposed to a broadcast basis.

Interoperability

The condition achieved among information and communication systems when information (i.e., data, voice, image, audio, or video) can be easily and cost-effectively shared across acquisition, transmission, and presentation technologies, equipment, and services.

Grant

Financial assistance award authorized by law to support autonomous projects or activities of state or local governments, or non-profit groups. This term does not include direct United States government cash assistance to an individual, a subsidy, a loan, a loan guarantee, or insurance.

Model

A project that employs a novel, innovative, and replicable approach. The ultimate impact of a model project should extend far beyond the community or communities to be served by the project itself.

National Information Infrastructure (NII) Initiative

A Federal policy initiative to facilitate and accelerate the development and utilization of the nation's information infrastructure. The Administration's vision for the NII is of a seamless web of communications networks, computers, databases, and consumer electronics that will put vast amounts of information at users' fingertips. For more detailed information on various aspects of the NII initiative, see e.g., The National Information Infrastructure: Agenda for Action, 58 FR 49,025 (September 21, 1993).

Planning Project

A deliberative process in which an organization, or group of organizations, develops plans and strategies for the enhanced application of information infrastructure. The outcome of a planning project should be a plan for improved delivery of social services, economic development, or increased citizen access to information resources.

Scalability

The ability of a system to accommodate a significant growth in the size of the system (i.e., services provided, end users served) without the need for substantial redesign. A scalable approach that is demonstrated on a small scale can also be applied on a larger scale.

Social Services

Activities performed by public or private entities to meet basic community needs. Examples include education, health care and public health, public information, public safety, and economic development.

Underserved

End users who are subject to barriers that limit or prevent their access to either social services or information infrastructure. In terms of information infrastructure, these barriers may be linguistic, geographic, economic, or cultural. A rural community may be physically isolated from circuits adequate to allow for data access; inner city neighborhoods may contain large numbers of potential end users for whom ownership of computer hardware is unlikely; residents of isolated ethnic communities may lack the requisite language skills to permit ease of access to on-line information resources.

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